



**Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon**  
**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

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March 24, 2020  
Tuesday of the 4<sup>th</sup> Week of Lent

**UPDATED DIRECTIVE TO RESPOND TO COVID-19 &  
MARCH 25 DAY OF RECONCILIATION**

**To the Clergy, Catholic Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:**

I am contacting you in regard to the planned **Day of Reconciliation on March 25, 2020**. Since the announced COVID-19 directives on March 17, the Province has declared a state of emergency, and effective March 23 many non-essential services have been closed. ([See Public Health Order: The Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan has issued a Public Health Order to help control transmission of COVID-19 \(March 20, 2020\).](#))

The Chief Medical Officer is also strongly recommending the practice of “personal distancing” as we discussed at our meeting of Friday, March 20.

If parishes choose to go ahead with the Day of Reconciliation, they should do so under the following conditions:

- 1) Assure the appropriate distancing between priest and penitent. To be safe, this distance should be double the minimum recommendation of 6 feet (...should be 12 feet);
- 2) An adequate room should be used for individual confessions, that assures proper distancing and confidentiality;
- 3) Regular “confessionals” are generally not appropriate as the screens are porous, and the distance between priest and penitent is well under the required distance;
- 4) The place used by the penitent should be disinfected with an appropriate solution for this (Please see attached for guidelines); Cleaning and disinfecting must address surfaces – including chairs-pew and railings. Rigorous hand washing is also important;
- 5) The church space should also be set up so that appropriate distancing can be maintained. The church space should be regularly disinfected; and
- 6) Numbers in the church must also be limited. While the ‘legal’ minimum is 25, the recommended number of people in a space is 5. Given that a church is generally a larger space, pastors are directed to be prudent about maximum numbers of persons in their churches.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact either my office, or the Chair of the Liturgy Committee, Fr. Geoffrey Young, at [gyoung@rcdos.ca](mailto:gyoung@rcdos.ca).

Yours sincerely, in Christ,

✠ Most Rev. Mark A. Hagemoen

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,  
in His desire to bring God’s love to all peoples.